

## Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2476

S E C R E T SEOUL 1811

NODIS CHEROKEE

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KS, US

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT PARK'S COMMENTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

REF: (A) STATE 48043; (B) SEOUL 1132 (STADIS)

SUMMARY. I RELAYED OUR POSITION ON PUBLIC STATEMENTS CONCERNING HUMAN RIGHTS TO PROTOCOL SECRETARY CHOE THIS MORNING (MARCH 5). FROM THE EXCHANGE, I BELIEVE IT TO BE ESSENTIAL THAT WE CLARIFY THE DEFINITION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AS IT PERTAINS TO KOREA. END SUMMARY.

1. AS INSTRUCTED IN REF A, I MET WITH PROTOCOL SECRETARY CHOE KWANG SOO THIS MORNING (MARCH 5) AND COVERED WITH HIM THE MESSAGE THAT WE WISH TO BE RELAYED TO PRESIDENT PARK. HE LISTENED CAREFULLY AND TOOK FULL NOTES.

2. IN RESPONSE CHOE EMPHASIZED THAT IN PARK'S VIEW, THERE WERE NO HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS IN KOREA BECAUSE ALL THOSE WHO HAD BEEN BROUGHT TO TRIAL HERE WERE CHARGED WITH A VIOLATION OF LAW. THOSE LAWS WERE APPROVED BY AN ELECTED ASSEMBLY AND WERE BASED ON A CONSTITUTION WHICH HAD BEEN APPROVED BY THE MAJORITY OF THE KOREAN CITIZENS. CHOE THEN ASKED, "IS THIS NOT DEMOCRACY?"

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3. CHOE THEN WENT ON TO STATE THAT, SINCE THE CONSTITUTION AND THE LAWS WERE APPROVED IN A DEMOCRATIC FASHION AND SINCE ALL VIOLATORS OF THOSE LAWS WERE TRIED IN ACCORDANCE WITH DUE PROCESS, THEN PRESIDENT PARK WOULD FIND IT INCOMPREHENSIBLE IF THE ADMINISTRATION CRITICIZED HIM FOR VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. PRESIDENT PARK COULD UNDERSTAND IF UNINFORMED GROUPS IN THE UNITED STATES MIGHT PRESENT AN

UNBALANCED PICTURE, BUT THAT IT WOULD BE EMBARRASSING  
IF THE ADMINISTRATION SPOKE OUT.

4. WE THEN WENT ON TO A DISCUSSION OF THE DEFINITION OF  
HUMAN RIGHTS WITH COE ASKING ME WHAT I UNDERSTOOD TO BE  
THE KEY ISSUES. I TOLD HIM THAT MY PERSONAL VIEW WAS  
THAT WE WOULD JUDGE PROBLEMS BY SUCH CRITERIA AS BY  
FREEDOM OF SPEECH, FREEDOM OF THE PRESS, DUE PROCESS  
AND UNWARRANTED IMPRISONMENTS, ILLUSTRATING THESE  
POINTS WITH EXAMPLES SUCH AS KIM TAE JUNG AND THE MOST  
RECENT MARCH ONE EPISODES. I ALSO SUGGESTED THAT SOME  
PROGRAM LEADING TO IDEAL CONDITIONS MIGHT BE HELPFUL.  
(COMMENT: THIS SUGGESTION STEMMED FROM A PREVIOUS CON-  
VERSATION I HAD WITH CHOE IN WHICH HE HAD VOLUNTEERED THAT  
THERE WAS CURRENTLY A GAP BETWEEN THE PRESENT SITUATION  
AND THE IDEAL SITUATION.)

5. HIS RESPONSE, OF COURSE, WAS TO REEMPHASIZE THAT ALL  
ACTIONS TAKEN WERE IN ACCORDANCE WITH ESTABLISHED LAW.  
HE RAISED THE QUESTION OF WHAT PRESIDENT CARTER MEANT  
WHEN HE STATED THAT HIS CONCERNS WERE NOT DIRECTED  
TOWARD THE REORDERING OF POLITICAL STRUCTURES. I TOLD  
CHOE THAT WE ARE NOT INTERESTED IN HOW A GOVERNMENT  
ORGANIZED ITSELF, BUT THAT WE ARE INTERESTED IN HOW IT DEALT  
WITH ITS INDIVIDUAL CITIZENS.

6. COMMENT: IT IS QUITE CLEAR THAT PRESIDENT PARK HOPES  
THAT HIS POSITION THAT NO HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS EXISTED  
IN KOREA WOULD BE ACCEPTED BY THE ADMINISTRATION AND THAT  
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THEREFORE NO PUBLIC COMMENTS WOULD BE REQUIRED. IN LIGHT  
OF THE PREVIOUS PARK-AMBASSADOR-VESSEY MEETING AND MY  
SESSION THIS MORNING, I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT ROKG HAS  
ANY REASON TO ASSUME THAT WE WOULD NOT MAKE PUBLIC  
STATEMENTS ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE, WHEN APPROPRIATE.  
THE AMBASSADOR CAN DESCRIBE MORE PRECISELY THE DEPTH  
OF PRESIDENT PARK'S FEELINGS ON THIS ISSUE.

7. THIS CONVERSATION, IN ADDITION TO A NUMBER OF OTHERS  
I HAVE HAD THIS PAST WEEK, FURTHER SUPPORTS THE  
SUGGESTION THAT THE AMBASSADOR MADE IN REF B IN WHICH  
HE SAID, "AS A FIRST STEP, WE SHOULD CLARIFY IN OUR OWN MINDS  
THE DEFINITION OF 'HUMAN RIGHTS' AS IT PERTAINS TO  
KOREA." I BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT IF WE ARE TO HAVE  
A MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE WITH THE ROK, TO DEFINE AS PRECISELY  
AS POSSIBLE WHAT OUR CRITERIA WILL BE AGAINST WHICH WE  
WILL JUDGE THE ADEQUACY OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS POLICIES  
HERE IN KOREA. SINCE THE ROK INSISTS THAT DUE PROCESS  
IS BEING FOLLOWED STRICTLY BASED ON LAWS APPROVED BY

AN ELECTED ASSEMBLY, WE NEED TO FOCUS ON THE QUESTION OF WHICH  
LAWS WE FIND DISTASTEFUL AND WHAT CHANGES WE WOULD EXPECT  
EITHER IN THE SHORT OR LONG TERM WHICH WOULD SATISFY OUR  
HUMAN RIGHTS OBJECTIVES. CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO  
A FURTHER PRIVATE COMMUNICATION WITH PRESIDENT PARK WHICH WILL  
SPELL OUT OUR POSITION. THIS SUGGESTION HAS NOT BEEN DISCUSSED  
WITH AMBASSADOR.  
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